

Divided Highways is about men like MacDonald who conceived or contributed to the conception of modern interstate highways, and the people who opposed and use(d) them. Lewis weaves their stories together, describing, summarizing, and synthesizing, but in the end he advances no new interpretation of the rise of the American car culture or the effects of the highways built to serve it. That is not really his purpose. This book, like the PBS documentary, is designed to edify and entertain an interested, general audience. Packed with information and written in a pleasingly clear style, *Divided Highways* will do just that.

As a reference, the book is less satisfactory. The narrative, while it flows smoothly, is so seamless that it blurs together like a landscape viewed while traveling at interstate highway speeds. *Divided Highways* needs more rest stops. Introductory summaries for each of the book's three parts and concluding summaries at the end of each chapter would help considerably. The bibliography contains several outdated sources and lacks more recent, standard works. Surprising omissions include Chester H. Liebs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile* (1985); James E. Vance, *Capturing the Horizon* (1990); and Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias* (1987).

Other defects in this otherwise prodigious effort are factual. Did the 1956 act specify 12, 13, or 16 years for the completion of the interstates (xi, 121, 122)? Regarding Iowa, Iowans were not especially progressive when it came to road building, as Lewis states (10). Only in the 1920s did Iowans really commit themselves to paying for all-weather roads, and then only with federal aid. Finally, Thomas H. MacDonald's home town was served by the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railroad, not the "Missouri and St. Louis" (6, 22).

Iowa's Rural War against Crime, 1920-1941, by Douglas M. Wertsch. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997. xii, 250 pp. Tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$89.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY CLARE V. MCKANNA JR., SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

In his discussion of rural crime, Douglas M. Wertsch suggests that between 1920 and 1940 "Iowa's rural law enforcement officers shared . . . the belief that they faced the threat of an engulfing 'crime wave'" (ix). But, as Wertsch convincingly argues, the "crime wave" was an illusion. Discovering that most crime studies are urban oriented, the author chose his topic to provide insights about rural crime and to explain factors that make it distinctive.

Wertsch offers readers a window of opportunity to examine rural policing, police professionalization, vigilantism, and the "Cornbelt Rebellion." He claims that statistical data from the jail dockets of nine of Iowa's "most rural" counties—Adair, Allamakee, Audubon, Iowa, Kossuth, Lyon, Pocahontas, Ringgold, and Winneshiek—"provide the most complete and the most accurate information that can be gathered" (30) to study rural crime. After analyzing 5,080 cases, Wertsch concludes that there was no rural "crime wave" in Iowa. Rural crime was usually minor, with violation of prohibition, petty theft, and creating a public nuisance accounting for 60 percent of the cases. Felony crimes included theft (12 percent) and rape (2 percent). Wertsch also concludes that "rural crime was the work of local, laboring-class men in their twenties" rather than organized criminals (45).

Wertsch notes that sheriffs turned to the FBI to professionalize by learning fingerprinting and crime scene investigative techniques and acquiring sub-machine guns, shotguns, and tear gas guns. Rural law enforcement officials used some of these weapons to apprehend bank robbers and also to "quell" the Cornbelt Rebellion. Fortunately, the Thompson sub-machine guns were mainly for show.

Surprisingly, Iowa's rural counties turned to vigilantism to combat crime. According to Wertsch, the Iowa Bankers' Association (IBA) armed 3,791 vigilantes with Krag rifles and Colt pistols acquired from the Rock Island Arsenal. However, sawed-off shotguns were the most popular weapons. The IBA claimed that their vigilantes "captured 79 bank robbers" and killed six others (169).

The Cornbelt Rebellion provides an interesting scenario to show how sheriffs dealt with rural unrest caused by economic hard times. From 1931 to 1933, farmers in northwestern Iowa protested foreclosure sales of farms by local banks, occupied the statehouse, and prevented the delivery of produce to market. Most of the sheriffs tried "gentleness and toleration" until violence escalated. Sometimes sheriffs were amused by the penny sales farmers used to prevent foreclosure, and informed the court that the sales had been concluded. However, increasing violence forced some sheriffs to take a firmer stand. Despite claims that Communists were organizing farmers, Wertsch concludes that the Cornbelt Rebellion was "spontaneous and exclusively local" (210).

There are several research problems. Historians may wonder why the author used potentially unreliable jail dockets for his study rather than Criminal Registers of Action, which record indictments and convictions of those charged with committing criminal acts. Equally distressing, no citations for the jail dockets appear in the footnotes or the

bibliography. Another concern is the absence of population figures that would make it possible to compare crime rates in the nine counties he studied with other rural regions during the same period. It is also a shame that the publisher did not typeset the manuscript and spend a little editorial time to improve the quality of the tables and correct footnoting errors in chapter four. Nonetheless, Wertsch has provided a useful discussion of rural crime in Iowa that will interest many readers. His study may encourage other historians to study rural crime and give it the recognition it deserves.

Cutting into the Meatpacking Line: Workers and Change in the Rural Midwest, by Deborah Fink. Studies in Rural Culture. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. xv, 235 pp. Illustrations, map, tables, notes, index. \$45.00 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY WILSON J. WARREN, INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Deborah Fink's book is an important contribution to the growing literature on contemporary working-class life in the rural Midwest. Focusing on how Iowa's meatpacking industry has affected rural workers and communities, her study provides a sobering counterweight to facile examinations of resurgent rural population growth that fail to convey the seamy economic underpinnings of much of that growth (see, for example, "The Rural Rebound" in the spring 1998 issue of the *Wilson Quarterly*).

Blending anthropological and historical approaches, Fink bases her analysis on a four-month stint working in the IBP pork packing plant in Perry, Iowa, in 1992. Although lacking the dramatic narration and radical call to action of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, Fink's participant-observer perspective, her use of extensive interview testimony, and her survey of the recent historical and social science literature on the industry and its workers convey much of the same forcefulness as did Sinclair's book nearly a century ago. Fink's work mirrors many of Sinclair's findings on the dreadfulness of packinghouse work, and suggests, sadly enough, how working conditions in the industry have gone full circle over the course of the twentieth century.

Fink focuses on three themes: the continuity of rural economic and social dislocations in the twentieth century, the significance of rural workers in Iowa's history, and the importance of gender, ethnicity, and racial issues in rural midwestern history. She develops the first two themes by focusing on the evolution of meatpacking in Perry from the opening of its first plant, Hausserman Packing Company, in 1920 through IBP's recent location there.

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